

Environment Committee Testimony  
Public Hearing March 1, 2019

Co-Chair: Senator Cohen  
Co-Chair: Representative Demicco  
Members of the Committee

Regarding: **HB 6637 AN ACT REQUIRING AN INVASIVE SPECIES STAMP FOR THE OPERATION OF A MOTORBOAT ON THE INLAND WATERS OF THE STATE**

**I Support the Concept of HB-6637.** I understand the need to address the problems caused by Invasive Species and more specifically, Aquatic Invasive Species. A modest fee for 'Boaters using Connecticut Waters' seems to be a reasonable approach. It should be 'modest' and it should be 'easy' for all boaters using our waters including residents and non-residents.

Aquatic invasive species are increasingly impacting water quality, recreational use, environmental health, and property values associated with Connecticut water bodies. Lake Pocotopaug in East Hampton has, for a long time, struggled with water quality because of cyanobacteria blooms. I remain concerned that invasive species will only exacerbate the problems for this lake.

State agencies, municipalities, and lake authorities lack the resources to address this growing threat. Funding and staffing for the prevention and control of invasive species and cyanobacteria blooms, have been lacking and, at the same time, we are experiencing increasing damage and risk. There needs to be a dedicated effort by the State of Conn to assist our towns as well as focus on the state controlled bodies of water. Boats are the most common vector of aquatic invasive species. This is supported by research.

We need to not only make the fees reasonable, but the administrative process must be as simple as possible for both residents and non-residents. We need to make the effective date coincide with boater registration. We should allow non-residents the opportunity for either individual 'stamp certification' or 'certification of the boat', like residents. Fishermen coming into CT for a one day fishing trip or tournament, will want the ease of an individual stamp certificate acquired online. Vacationers will more likely want to 'certify the boat', so multiple users over the period of their stay may operate the boat, in all likelihood in the same waters during their stay. The funds must be made available to both municipalities and the DEEP for effective prevention and eradication of aquatic invasive species and cyanobacteria blooms.

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on this topic. I look forward to the Environment Committee's deliberation and effective action in modifying the current language to best provide the funds needed and to establish fair and efficient administration of all who use our inland waters.

Sincerely;

Bruce Tolhurst  
16 Virginia Rail Dr  
Marlborough, CT 06447